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Ministry of SMEs and Startups Hosts Largest Domestic Global Super Gap Tech Conference

SEJONG – The Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS) successfully hosted the largest-ever domestic Global Super Gap Tech Conference on November 26-27 at the Conrad Seoul Hotel. The conference brought together a diverse range of participants, including super-gap startups, global conglomerates, public institutions, and international venture businesses. Its primary goal was to facilitate the exchange of cutting-edge technologies and promote the strategic acquisition of new innovations, as well as the global expansion of deep-tech startups in emerging industries.

The event was held under the theme: "The Convergence of AI and New Technologies: New Possibilities Created by Startups!" The conference focused on exploring how core technologies from 10 key emerging industries—such as AI, system semiconductors, and big data—can be integrated to foster groundbreaking innovations. This year's conference saw a significant expansion of side events related to new industry technology forums compared to 2023.

Minister Oh Youngju of SMEs and Startups emphasized the vital role of deep-tech startups in driving technological advancement and global economic growth. She stated, "Deep-tech startups in emerging industries are not only leading the global economy but also spearheading technological and industrial progress." Minister Oh also highlighted the MSS's commitment to expanding policies that will support deep-tech startups as future growth engines for the nation. "Our initiatives include phased support for super-gap startups, specialized programs for AI and fabless startups, and fostering collaborations with large corporations," she added.

The opening ceremony on November 26 featured a showcase of advanced technologies developed by super-gap startups. Awards were presented to outstanding startups, such as Nota Inc., as well as their corporate partners. The ceremony also included a keynote speech

by Professor Toby Walsh, a global AI expert from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Australia. Professor Walsh's address, titled "The Development and Prospects of AI Technologies and the Role of Startups," set the tone for the discussions that followed.

Throughout the event, which continued through November 27, a series of 13 technology forums were held across 10 emerging industries, including AI, big data, and system semiconductors. In addition, nine ancillary events took place, including Global IR sessions, Public Institution Purchasing Consultations, and Open Innovation Talk Con. The conference also featured an exhibition showcasing innovative technologies from leading startups.

Highlights of the Event:

① Awards for Outstanding Super Gap Startups and Contributors

The Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS) presented ministerial commendations to a total of 20 entities, recognizing excellence in sales and investment performance in 2024. Among the honorees were 10 super gap startups, including Nota Inc., which demonstrated outstanding achievements. Additionally, four large corporations that have significantly supported the growth of startups, along with six distinguished contributors from specialized institutions, were also acknowledged for their contributions to fostering innovation and growth in the startup ecosystem.

② Super Gap Technology Forums (10 Sectors)

A series of technology forums featured presentations by renowned global experts on the latest trends in new industry technologies, as well as strategies for the growth and international expansion of AI-driven super gap startups. The forums included insightful panel discussions with a diverse range of experts, including executives from large corporations, venture capitalists, professors, and influential figures from various sectors.

The technology forums kicked off with a presentation by Kenneth Freeman, Vice President of Legrand Group, a global leader in digital infrastructure, on the topic "Human Experience with AI IoT", followed by a lively panel discussion. In the eco-friendly and energy sector, Orbit, a popular science YouTuber, delivered a thought-provoking presentation titled "Can Science and Technology Solve the Climate Crisis?", followed by an engaging panel discussion. Over the two days, forums covered a wide array of AI-centered topics in emerging industries such as system semiconductors, biotechnology, and robotics, discussing strategies to enhance the global competitiveness of deep-tech startups.

③ Side Events (Three) and Specialized Programs (Six)

In addition to the main forums, several side events were organized to attract global investment for super gap startups. These included a 'Global IR' featuring 10 global venture capitalists, 'Public Institution Purchasing Consultations' to promote entry into public markets, and an 'Open Innovation Talk Con' to foster open innovation with large corporations. In addition, specialized programs were held to support high-demand areas among startups, such as a 'Digital Healthcare Experience Exhibition' for healthcare startups to discover business opportunities and a 'Robot Startup Growth Exchange' for attracting investment in robotics startups.

To further highlight the achievements of super gap startups, five companies, including NTWICK Co., Ltd., a recipient of the CES 2025 Innovation Award, set up promotional booths to showcase their cutting-edge technologies. These booths provided attendees with the opportunity to directly experience the innovative solutions and future visions of these emerging startups.